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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2826
INFO RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001191

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, S/CT; NSC FOR J. BADER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/09/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [PGOV](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: ACEH -- MAINTAINING THE PEACE AND RECONCILIATION
PROCESS

REF: 08 JAKARTA 2028

Classified By: Ambassador Cameron R. Hume, reasons 1.4(b+d).

11. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate Medan.

12. (C) SUMMARY: Ambassador Hume briefed ambassadors and country directors of major donor organizations on July 7 on a U.S. Mission initiative to form a group of eminent Achenese to advise on the way forward in consolidating peace and reconciliation in Aceh. The Advisory Committee for the Aceh Peace Process (ACAPP) would meet regularly over three months, producing a white paper on the Acehnese vision to sustain peace. The senior diplomats who attended the briefing thought the idea had merit, but wondered whether the GOI would support further foreign involvement in Aceh. USAID will take the diplomat's comments into account as it evaluates the project proposal. END SUMMARY.

ACEH IN TRANSITION

13. (C) Aceh is in transition. The Aceh Reintegration Board (BRR) has closed shop, a new provincial Parliament has been elected, dominated by former separatists in Partai Aceh, and many donors are winding down operations. The peace process still needs support but there is no consensus about what form that should take.

14. (C) In order to encourage a locally-driven braintrust to develop recommendations for future activities to support the Aceh peace process, the U.S. Mission will consider funding a group of Aceh's most respected thinkers to meet over three months. ACAPP will then present a policy paper on practical steps forward for peace and reconciliation. USAID will consider funding an Acehnese NGO to facilitate the formation of the ACAPP. ACAPP would be composed of Acehnese leaders from politics, academia, and civil society, as well as a few eminent non-Acehenese. Although the Mission is facilitating this group and has provided names of suggested members based on our consultations, a small core group of widely respected Acehnese will have the final say on the ACAPP's composition and direction.

OBJECTIVES OF NEW GROUP

15. (SBU) ACAPP's main objective simply is to "gather ideas and input of peace sustaining strategies from prominent people and institutions," according to a concept paper presented by Humam Hamid, a U.S.-educated professor at Aceh's top school, Syiah Kuala University. ACAPP will meet with leaders and institutions in focus groups at the national, provincial and grassroots levels, as well as with international donors. Hamid is working to form the group with one of Indonesia's well-known intellectuals, Rizal Sukma of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Sukma also has close links with the central government and is internationally respected.

¶16. (C) In order to have credibility both in Aceh and with the GOI--which harbors suspicions that some Acehnese still hold separatist ambitions--ACAPP will have members from both Aceh and Java. While Governor Irwandi Yusuf has fully endorsed ACAPP, this group will also need to gain the support of the central government. To that end, ACAPP will also include a member of President Yudhoyono's inner circle, retired Lt.Gen. Agus Widjojo, known for his integrity in chairing the Commission on Truth and Friendship for Indonesia/Timor Leste.

¶17. (SBU) The U.S. hopes that ACAPP will be regarded as a useful initiative which can help Indonesia and foreign donors to pursue synergy in the face of dwindling foreign funding. With a growing pot of revenue from regional autonomy, the Aceh Provincial Government also now has the capacity to fund peace projects, although it needs a sense of direction. Our hope is that this initiative will be viewed as purely Acehnese with all stakeholders benefiting. ACAPP is expected to be formed and running in less than a month, and to present its white paper by November.

JULY 7 EVENT

¶18. (C) On July 7, Ambassador Hume discussed the initiative with a group of 14 Ambassadors, and representatives from a number of foreign governments and donor organizations. The group included representatives from European countries, plus Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, Singapore, the EU,

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World Bank and UNDP. The Ambassador described the need to maintain the fragile peace in Aceh. The group concurred, but urged caution as the USG develops any further initiatives in Aceh. Many of the diplomats present were apprehensive about pursuing such an initiative without full support from Partai Aceh (the main political party in the area), the Acehnese government, and the central government in Jakarta. Some warned that the central government believes that Aceh should not be singled out as a region and does not want foreign influence in Aceh.

¶19. (C) The EU Ambassador agreed that the political will to support Aceh peace remains strong but the financial commitment is now weak. He said the EU would like to be part of this initiative, but also wanted to be sure the initiative was fully owned by the regional and central governments. The Japanese ambassador said his country would like to contribute more to peace projects and looks forward to ACAPP recommendations. Other diplomats indicated that the ACAPP would need to take into account other regional initiatives and roundtables, as there may be groups already formed to provide guidance and feedback on the way forward in Aceh. They also expressed a desire to see a balance of views and backgrounds in the composition of the ACAPP, and not just limit the group to eminent persons who may have an entrenched view.

¶10. (C) Ambassador Hume said we welcome suggestions for the composition of the ACAPP and input for the direction of the initiative. Mission will continue to vet the idea with the central government, and USAID will take into account the comments of the group as it evaluates the project proposal.

HUME